

interest in revealing the true status of the aphid, and possibly lead to the description of the early summer biology which is currently unknown — I. F. G. McLean, Nature Conservancy Council, Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA.

#### REFERENCES

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**The spread of *Phlyctaenia perlucidalis* (Hübner) (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae) to Hampshire.**—The first record of this marshland species in Britain was at Woodwalton Fen in 1951. According to Goater (1986), it subsequently spread to the fens of Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire and the coasts of Lincolnshire, Suffolk, Essex and Kent and in 1983 as far north as south-east Yorkshire. A specimen from Nottinghamshire was exhibited at the 1987 Annual Exhibition of the British Entomological and Natural History Society (Sterling, 1988). These all indicate that the spread of the species was restricted initially to wet areas in the eastern part of the country. The only record outside this area was a report that one had been taken at Waterlooville, Hants. VC11 in 1973 in Goater (1974). Waterlooville is near to the coast and as no more were reported, this specimen cannot be explained in terms of the extension of the British colony, but as a casual specimen.

On the night of 24/25.vi.88, I took a specimen in an M. V. light trap being run at the edge of the River Test marshes at Leckford, Hants. VC12. I then had a telephone call from Mr A. H. Dobson informing me that he had taken a specimen at the trap run at the Hampshire College of Agriculture, Sparsholt on the night of 20/21.vi.88. Sparsholt spans VC11 and VC12 and although the trap was inside VC11 and not in a marshy area, it is in fact only 4 miles from Leckford. I then received a further specimen from Dr R. J. Hornby for confirmation of identity. This had been taken in his garden M. V. light at East Woodhay, Hampshire VC12 on the night of 5/6.vii.88, the garden being beside a stream and adjacent to a very wet alder wood and an ungrazed marshy meadow.

Traps have been run on a fairly regular basis at these sites over at least the last few years without this species being seen previously and three records over a period of 16 days in the current year would indicate that the moth has very recently established a breeding area or areas in the northern part of Hampshire. The British foodplant has not yet been established.—Col. D. H. Sterling, 'Tangmere', 2 Hampton Lane, Winchester, Hants. SO 22 5LF.

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**Mass emergence and apparent 'perching' behaviour of *Notozus panzeri* (F.) (Hymenoptera: Chrysididae).**—Rubytail (or 'cuckoo') wasps are parasitoids of solitary aculeates. And although their hosts may nest closely within a small area giving the appearance of a colony, rubytails themselves are not noted for their abundance or mass occurrence. I was therefore more than a little surprised when I recently found *Notozus panzeri* in large numbers.

On 25 June 1988, my father A. W. Jones and I were walking along the bare sandy tracks of Ambersham Common, West Sussex. At about 3.30 in the afternoon, my

eye was suddenly caught by several flashes of bright silvery metallic light just above the short *Calluna*. At the same time, my father announced that he had just swept several rubytails. These proved to be *Notozus panzeri*, and several more sweeps of the net showed that this species was quite common here.

On looking around, it was as though the *Calluna* at the edges of the path was twinkling, as dozens of rubytails flitted about. Over a stretch of about ten metres there were perhaps between five and ten per metre, all keeping to within about one metre from the bare edge of the path where the *Calluna* was short, about eight inches high. We had previously found *Notozus* singly, and other chrysidids only in small numbers. Yet here were several dozen within a very small area.

On hands and knees in an attempt to observe them more closely, and even perhaps photograph them, a more or less repeated behaviour could be discerned. They seemed to be selecting perches at the tips of the *Calluna* leaves. A wasp would hover about, appearing to concentrate on a single 'target' about which it would manoeuvre for a second or two before settling head out at the very apex of the stem. It then adopted an alert almost straining posture, standing out as far as its legs would allow, its antennae outstretched and quivering. Here it would stay for several seconds until disturbed by a passing shape, sometimes another rubytail, sometime a fly, sometimes another insect. When alerted, it would dart out to investigate, but never very closely; then it would return to its previous perch or another close by.

I have been unable to find any published reference to this or similar behaviour (Morgan, 1984; Morice, 1896, 1900), although Smith (1862) does state "some years ago I met with it in some numbers at Sandhurst near the military College; again in 1861 in the month of September I beat three or four into my net at Byfleet near Weybridge".

The hosts of *Notozus* (*Psen* spp.) were not about as far as I could judge, and as all the specimens we collected were males, it is possible that they were selecting sites from which to locate females.

An interesting result of the photography was the camouflage effect of the bright metallic colours which was revealed. The red of the abdomen almost exactly resembles the head of the tips of the *Calluna* leaves, and with the head-out position the abdomen was held close to this leaf tip, the change to green on the thorax enhancing the effect as the red of the *Calluna* leaves gave way to green, down away from the tips.—Richard A. Jones, 10 Nunhead Grove, Nunhead, London SE15 3LY.

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